

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

N E W S F L A S H E S

MAY 1, 1 9 3 8

LOAN EXHIBITIONS: For the month of May, the exhibitions in the temporary galleries will be diversified and of special interest. There will be two one man shows by German artists, Lovis Corinth and Max Beckmann, and a group of contemporary American paintings circulated by the Kansas State Federation of Art.

LOVIS CORINTH was born in Königsberg, Germany, in 1858 and died in Holland in 1925. With Max Liebermann and Max Slevogt, he led the movement in Germany away from the romantic, sentimental painting of Arnold Böcklin and his followers to a preoccupation with the realities of nature. This movement was strongly influenced by a knowledge of the work of the French Impressionists and marked the beginning of the trend of German painting towards the ideals of the school of Paris, which was noted at the end of the nineteenth century.

Martha Davidson has written of his work: "Corinth has been called an Impressionist by some and an Expressionist by others. Actually he stands midway between the two. His countrymen love to compare him with Rubens but if we look for an artistic kinsman we can find no one closer than Van Gogh. Less tortured but similarly dynamic, Corinth gave sensuous eloquence to his brush which was immeasurably free, sometimes volcanic, but always more form building than the disintegrating strokes of the Impressionists. A draughtsman of rare skill, his line was always boldly expressive. Especially in his portraits did Corinth manifest the force of his own personality. Whomever he painted, he invested with a magnetism that by dint of certain veiled, undefinable features has none of the static qualities of a painted picture."

This group, which has been lent by the artist's son, will be a varied one and will include portraits, flower pieces and several examples from his famous series of Walchensee landscapes. Some of Corinth's painting may be outmoded today, but, standing as it does at the head of the modern movement in Germany, it is of inestimable interest and importance.

MAX BECKMANN has been the most powerful figure in German art for the past twenty years. He was born in Leipzig in 1884 and studied at the Weimar Academy. A scholarship and travel in Italy produced little effect on his purely traditional German art. He was one of the leaders in the Secession group of Berlin in 1906 and since that time has dominated the painting of his country. After the war he devoted most of his efforts to teaching. He has had some American exhibitions and in 1929 won the second prize at the Carnegie International. Last summer he was compelled to leave Germany and is now living in Holland.

The group of his paintings to be shown at the Gallery formed the nucleus of a recent one man show in New York. The exhibition was received with acclaim by all the critics. The Art News wrote: "Whether this artist paints a still life, a landscape, or a figure, he invariably contorts and distorts his subject in order to reshape it according to his own emotional and intellectual reactions. Something of the tortured, tormented spirit of Van Gogh is found again in the work of this contemporary artist."

The outstanding example in the exhibition will be the three-panelled "Departure" which is the artist's bitter cry against the inquisitions of his modern society. It may be too strong fare for some, but it should be borne in mind that it is the graphic expression of a protest against the post-war conditions in Germany and especially against the stand taken by the present regime towards creative genius. Today, the majority of Germany's best-known artists have been compelled to take refuge outside their native country. The situation was intensified by the exhibition of subversive art held in Munich last summer. There is a wide-spread interest in the condition

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of contemporary art in Germany today and this, with the two exhibitors Corinth and Beckmann, will be the subject of Mr. Gardner's lecture on Wednesday Evening, May 4th.

THE KANSAS FEDERATION OF ART is extending its activities and is circulating for the first time a group of paintings by Kansas artists. These will also be shown in the loan galleries for the month of May and the exhibition will include such well-known painters as Birger Sandzen, Margaret Sandzen, William Dickerson, Raymond Eastwood, Glenn Golton, Elfreda Johnson, and Karl Mattern.

These three exhibitions will open on May 4th and will continue until May 27th.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: The group of contemporary American paintings in the permanent collection is growing with gratifying acceleration. There has just been presented another example in this field, "Mountain Laurel" by Andrée Ruellan, and it will be featured as the Masterpiece for the month of May. It is a gift of the Kansas City Chapter of the Degree of Honor Protective Association, and is given in memory of its former State President, Almaretta Morgan.

Miss Ruellan was born in New York in 1905 and gained the early distinction of exhibiting in the company of George Bellows, Robert Henri, and John Sloan when only eight years of age. Later she studied at the Art Students' League where she won a scholarship which enabled her to join the classes of Maurice Stern. Unlike most child prodigies who flash brilliantly for a while and then fade into obscurity, Miss Ruellan has more than fulfilled her early promise. She is included in a number of public collections and recently won a prize at the Worcester Museum Biennial Exhibition.

"Mountain Laurel" is an unstudied arrangement of field flowers in a Victorian vase placed on an old-fashioned square piano. It is an exquisite colour harmony of warm creams, pinks, tans, and browns, with touches of blue in the vase and the richer greens of the leaves. The mood of the painting has the unobtrusive graciousness of simple wild flowers and the atmosphere of the charm of a Victorian drawing-room.

LECTURES: The Wednesday Evening lecture for May 4th will be given by Mr. Gardner and will be devoted to the paintings of Corinth and Beckmann and a consideration of contemporary art under the present regime in Germany.

The final lecture in the series devoted to Sculpture will be given by Mr. Sickman on May 11th. Contemporary sculpture will be discussed and particular attention will be given to its trends towards abstraction and the influence of such primitive arts as African sculpture.

Wednesday Evening, May 18th, the first of two lectures on Persian Painting will be given by Miss Hughes. The period from the 12th through the 14th centuries will be covered and the famous Shah-nama or History of the Kings of Persia, written by Firdausi, will be discussed. The miniature of the Battle of Rustam and Isfandiar in the permanent collection is from a celebrated 14th century manuscript illustrating this history.

On May 25th the concluding lecture on Persian painting will be given by Mr. Sickman. The material will continue the tradition established in the 13th century and the 14th, through the most brilliant period of the 15th and 16th centuries when, under such masters as Bihzad, the Persian miniature reached its most complete development and greatest elaboration.

GALLERY CHANGES: A group of Chinese paintings from the permanent collection has just been hung in Gallery XXIV. The selection covers in time the years from the 13th to the 17th century and represents most of the branches of the Chinese painter's art. There is a group of landscapes, the earliest of the Southern Sung period (12th-13th century) and several of a century or so later, one of the most interesting being by Tung Ch'i-Ch'and (1555-1636), who was the great art critic of his time and the prototype of the scholarly "gentleman painters" of the eighteenth century. The Chinese genius in painting

flowers is well attested by a scroll of lotus from the hand of a celebrated painter of the sixteenth century. The less intellectual and more decorative side of Chinese painting is shown in a series of eight panels of the "One Hundred Birds" which is typical in its bright colours and exuberant composition of the 17th century bird and flower pieces which had such a profound influence on the decorative arts of Europe.

A feature of considerable interest is the fact that three of the scrolls in the exhibition come from the famous Imperial collection formed largely by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung in the 18th century and were purchased by the Gallery from his last descendant to sit on the throne of China. They were acquired in 1930 from P'u Yi, then an exile in the Japanese concession of Tientsin. They all bear the Imperial seals and the seal of the "Hall of Three Treasures" where they were kept in the Palace. Their former owner is now the Emperor Kang Teh in the Japanese supported state of Manchoukuo.

The entrance of the Cézanne landscape, "Montagne St. Victoire", into the permanent collection has necessitated a rehanging of the nineteenth century French paintings. These have now been installed in Gallery XV which is a larger room and where the paintings may be seen in daylight, so necessary for a full appreciation of this school. In addition to the Cézanne, the two Van Gogh, the Manet, the Seurat, the Monet, the Loiseau, and the Friesz compose a group of which any museum might well be proud.

A series of drawings from the permanent collection covering the schools of Italy, France, and Flanders has been installed in Gallery XIII and will remain on exhibition through the summer.

The Print Room, Gallery XVI, has been hung with a summer exhibition from the permanent collection which includes outstanding impressions by Pollaiuolo, Jacopo de Barbari, Mantegna, Master E.S., Schongauer, Dürer, Holbein, Cranach, Rembrandt, and Duvet.

FRIENDS OF ART: The first meeting of the study class of the Friends of Art for the month of May will be held on Wednesday, the 4th, when Mr. Gardner will discuss the contemporary German paintings in the loan exhibition. The second meeting will be on May 25th and will be conducted by Mr. Sickman.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: As the closing event of the winter term of Saturday classes, the marionette group will present "The Life of Robert Fulton" on Saturday afternoon, April 30, at 2:30. There is no admission charge and everyone interested in marionettes is cordially invited to be present.

While regular class activities will end on April 30th, the very popular Game Tray will be continued each Saturday through the month of May. Summer classes will begin early in June and announcement of registration dates will be made later.

The Little Museum for Young Moderns will entertain with a tea on Sunday, May 1, at which time Miss Beverly Templeton will be installed as the new Director, succeeding Miss Nancy Goodrich, who has so capably filled that position during the past year.

C A L E N D A R

Sat., April 30, 2:30 - Marionette Play "The Life of Robert Fulton"
Sun., May 1, 3:30 - Concert - Sponsored by Miss Mariamne Clarke
Wed., May 4, 11:00 - Friends of Art Study Class
Wed., May 4, 8:00 - Lecture - Contemporary German Painting -
Mr. Gardner
Sun., May 8, 3:30 - Concert - Sponsored by Richard Canterbury
Tues. May 10, 2:00 - Library - The Art Study Club
Wed., May 11, 8:00 - Lecture - Contemporary Sculpture - Mr. Sickman
Sun., May 15, 3:30 - Concert - Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota
Wed., May 18, 8:00 - Lecture - Persian Painting I - Miss Hughes
Sun., May 22, 5:30 - Concert - Kirkwood Hall - Glee Club of the
Kansas City Junior College
Wed., May 25, 11:00 - Friends of Art Study Class
Wed., May 25, 8:00 - Lecture - Persian Painting II - Mr. Sickman

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art
Kansas City, Missouri

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